

**District Director, Joann Glasson**  
**January 2019**

**Honolulu Board Meetings**

The Fall NABC (North American Bridge Championship) was held in picturesque Honolulu, Hawaii. The weather was beautiful, the hotel was lovely, but, sadly, only 6,000 tables were in play, a number that was considerably below the 8,600 tables in play the last time the NABC was held in Hawaii in 2006.

The contract with the Hilton Hawaiian Village, signed seven years ago, contained a room block commitment in return for the use of the playing space in the hotel. The ACBL was unable to fill that room block commitment and was responsible for paying huge penalties to the hotel. The reduced table count income and room block penalties resulted in a loss of about \$650K on this tournament.

All contracts for future NABCs have been reviewed by members of the Board of Directors and management and any actions that can be taken to mitigate this kind of loss in the future will be done, but some contracts with similar penalty clauses have been signed for NABCs as far out as 2025.

**A little history:**

NABC events are designed to generate about \$500K per year of income to the ACBL. In the past, that money was used to provide services to the bulk of our membership.

The playing space needed for NABC tournaments was provided at no cost with the tradeoff being significant room blocks guaranteed at the host hotel. Times have changed and with the advent of Airbnb and other cheaper alternatives to ACBL housing, NABCs are becoming a financial drain on the rest of the ACBL membership. Since we are powerless to reverse the housing trend and are stuck with existing contracts, the Board and management need to find solutions to make NABCs pay for themselves in the future. Clubs and non-NABC players cannot be expected to subsidize the cost of NABCs.

In order to effectively allocate the cost of NABCs to the players who play in them, entry fees for NABC+ events were raised to \$30 per session/per player (from \$25) and entry fees for other NABC events were raised to \$22 per session/per player (from \$17). In addition, an additional \$5 per player/per session fee will be added when screens are introduced into major events.

Entry fees for regional events at NABCs were increased from \$16 to \$20. This is the first time regional event fees at NABCs were increased in ten years.

With these table fee increases for the players comes the responsibility to control the expenses of NABCs in the future. The new 2019 ACBL President, Russ Jones, has charged the Finance Committee and management to work together to reduce expenses at future NABCs.

Earlier this year, that work began by the initiation of a new way of working with local committees to fund NABCs that will provide a cleaner accounting and the potential of savings to the ACBL, but more work needs to be done in managing NABC expenses.

## **Board of Directors**

I am strongly in favor of cutting board expenses by having one meeting a year in Horn Lake instead of at an NABC. The greatest amount of savings would occur if the Board met in Horn Lake in the early part of November instead of at the Fall NABC because the Thanksgiving holiday extends the board stay at the Fall meetings.

In Hawaii, a motion to reduce the number of board meetings from the current structure (3-4 day meetings at the NABCs) to one meeting in January at ACBL headquarters (Horn Lake, MS) and one meeting prior to the summer NABC was defeated.

As Chair of Finance, I was unable to support the motion because a fall meeting is important to review and present the budget for the upcoming year to the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee has cut a full day off of the Fall meetings by meeting electronically several times prior to the meeting, but some face-to-face time with the full Board is required.

The Finance Committee proposed and the Board passed a motion earlier in the year that eliminated the practice of taking new directors to the Fall board meeting before their terms began. With five new directors elected in 2019, the financial savings of this motion was substantial.

A motion was also passed that will establish a Masterpoint Committee that will be composed of both board and non-board members that will meet electronically. This will move the work of computing masterpoints for events out of board business and into the hands of players, reducing the amount of time needed at board meetings.

Russ Jones, 2019 ACBL President, has initiated additional cost savings by holding the new board member orientation in January electronically, instead of

the traditional face-to-face orientation. Also, the Board meetings at the Memphis NABC will be reduced to two and one-half days, beginning on Wednesday and ending at noon on Friday. This will result in more financial savings to the ACBL.

## **2019 Operating Budget**

A preliminary operating budget for 2019 was presented and reviewed by the Board of Directors. The budget projects a surplus of income over expenses of \$450K. Management will reserve a portion of this revenue for future NABC host hotel incentives or attrition penalties. More work will be done on the budget before it is presented and approved by the Board of Directors at the March Board Meeting in Memphis.

## **North American Pairs and Grand National Team Events**

The scheduling of NAP and GNT finals has become a little easier since Districts are now permitted to schedule the finals of these events opposite the open, women and senior team trials. Districts are encouraged to try to avoid these dates but the prohibition from scheduling opposite these events has been lifted.

In Districts in which there were at least eight teams competing in a B or C flight in the District final of the Grand National Teams, a second team in that flight will also be eligible to compete in the national final of their respective category. In District 4, that would permit the District to send two additional teams to compete at the National Level in GNT events, one from Flight B and one from Flight C.

In order to encourage participation in the Flight C NAP Events, the masterpoints have increased. The rating of Session Awards for Flight C NAP District Finals will be adjusted from 50% of Regional rating to 62.5% according to the following chart:

## **NAP District Finals Awards for Flight C**

Rating of Session Awards for Flight C NAP District Finals be adjusted from 50% of Regional rating to 62.5%. This will give additional gold points for the winners.

## **Club Table Fees**

The table fees for clubs holding short games (12 to 17 boards) have increased from \$0.55 to \$0.58. This largely effects only online bridge clubs.

## **Regional Tournaments**

A motion was passed that will give players who have won a Grand Life Master qualifying event the equivalent of 10,000 masterpoints for the purpose of bracketing and stratification at regional and national events. This will prohibit players who have won a Grand Life Master qualifying event from competing in masterpoint limited events at NABCs.

## **Sectional Tournaments**

Sectionals with an upper masterpoint limit of up to 500 masterpoints may be run by directors who are not ACBL employees. Such directors must be certified club directors.

With management approval at the time of sanctioning, a sponsoring organization may run a limited sectional with a maximum of 750 masterpoints using directors who are not ACBL employees.

If ACBL hand records are used at the masterpoint limited events, the normal charge applies. If an ACBL employee submits results to ACBL Live or provides any other support, the tournament will be charged a fee of \$50 over and above all other fees and charges.

## **Congratulations to District 4 Winners at the Honolulu NABC in National Events**

NAIL LIFE MASTER PAIRS: 20 - Richard Popper

0-10,000 SWISS: 2 – Miriam Harris-Botzum, John Botzum; 10 – Alvaro Ronderos, Estelle Ronderos

MITCHELL OPEN BOARD-A-MATCH: 20 – Connie Goldberg

0-10,000 IMP PAIRS: 3 – Miriam Harris-Botzum

0-10,000 FAST PAIRS: 5 - May Sakr

NABC MIXED SWISS TEAMS: 5 - May Sakr

## **Congratulations to District 4 Top 10 Winners in Regional Events**

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION KO – Bracket 1: 1 – Benito Garozzo

SATURDAY OPEN PAIRS: 8 – Marty Seligman

WEDNESDAY A/X/Y SWISS TEAMS: 1Y - John Dickenson, Deborah August

WEDNESDAY BAM TEAMS: 5 - Benito Garozzo

THURSDAY SIDE SWISS TEAMS: 1 – Benito Garozzo

FRIDAY-SATURDAY KO – Bracket 1:  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Benito Garozzo

FRIDAY-SATURDAY KO – Bracket 2:  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Jay Apfelbaum, April Apfelbaum, Dara Dinner, David Walker

SATURDAY A/X/Y SWISS TEAMS: 4 – Benito Garozzo

FRIDAY-SATURDAY KO - Bracket 1: 2 - Dara Dinner, David Walker, Estelle Ronderos, Al Ronderos

SUNDAY A/X/Y SWISS TEAMS: 1 – Benito Garozzo